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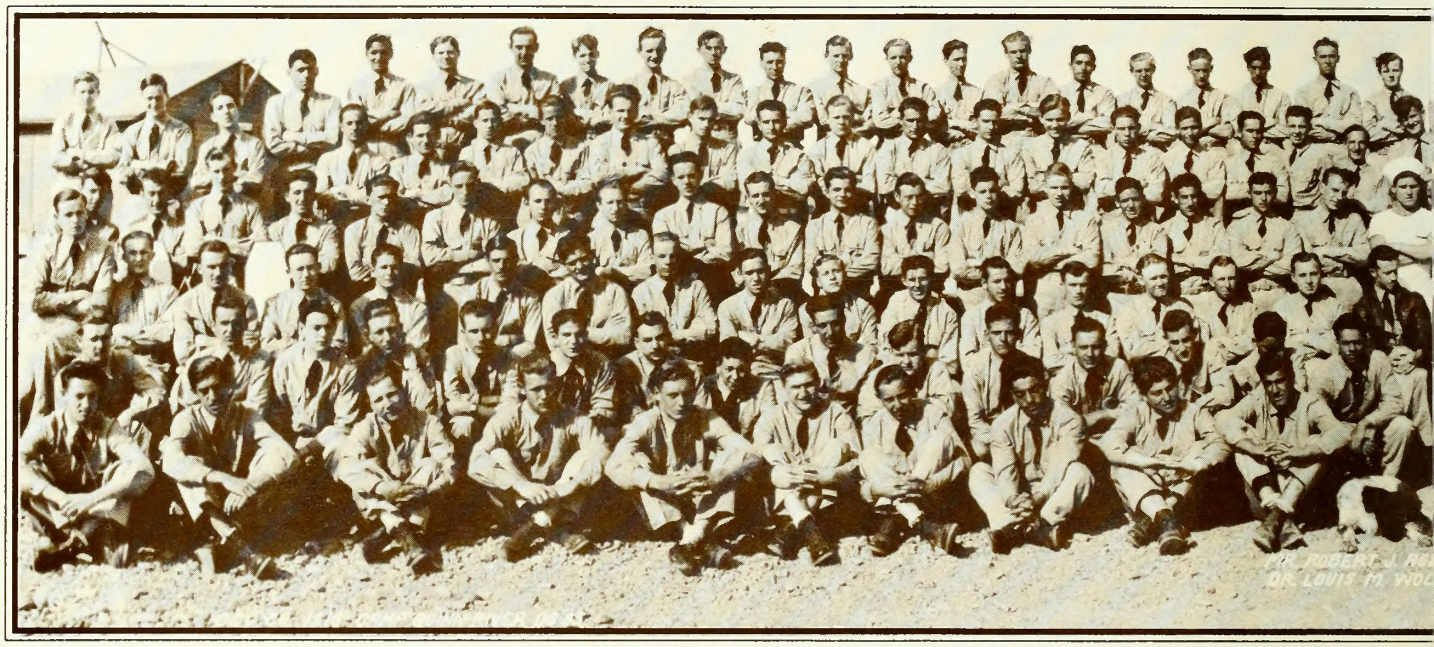
To share additional historic information on the CCC in Nevada, please write or call the Bureau of Land Management at 705 E. 4th St., Winnemucca, Nevada, 89445, (702) 623-1500, or the U.S. Forest Service, Humboldt National Forest, 976 Mountain City Highway, Elko, Nevada, 89801, (702) 738-5171.

CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS IN NORTHERN NEVADA

As part of our heritage, "ADVENTURES IN THE PAST" and "WINDOWS ON THE PAST" recognize the social and economic contributions of the Civilian Conservation Corps to Nevada as well as to the entire nation. Many of the Corps accomplishments are still in use today, making contributions to the present generation.

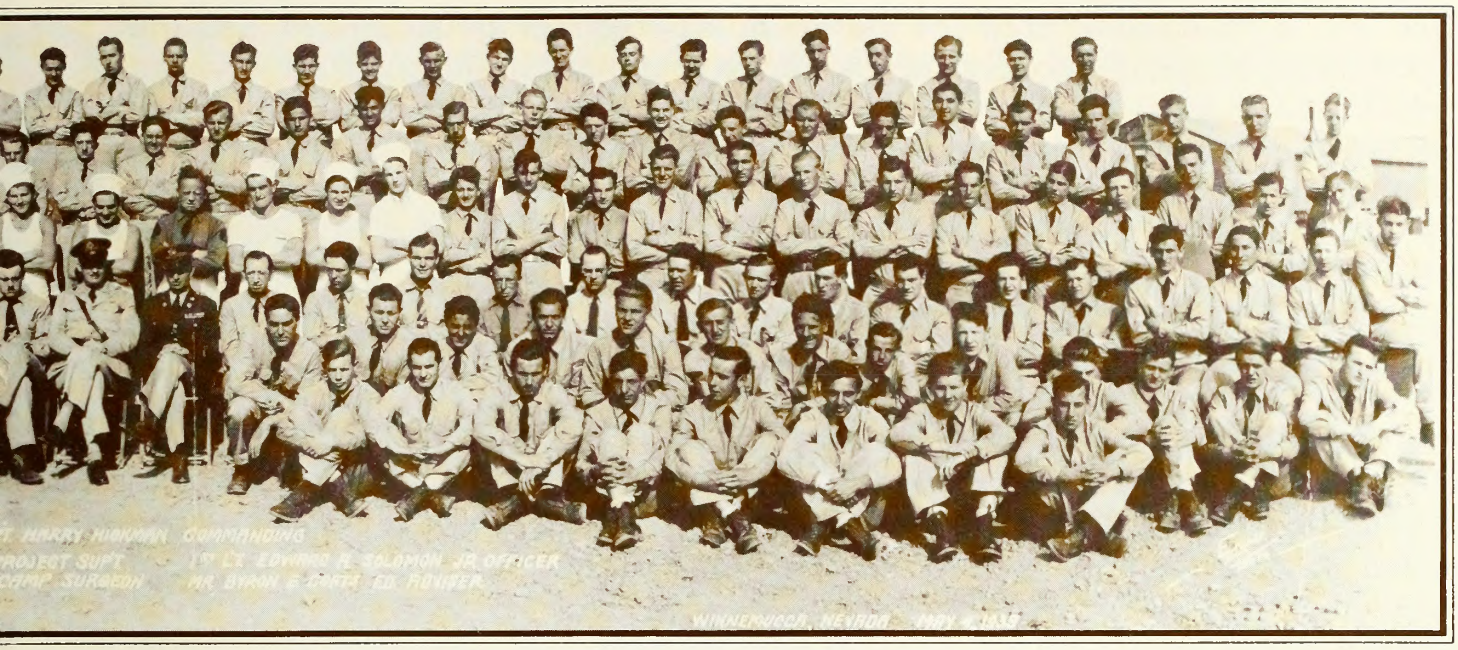


History

The Great Depression began with the stock market crash of 1929, causing economic stagnation and mass unemployment throughout the United States and Europe. The Civilian Conservation Corps (**CCC**), an early program of Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal, was based on various European models and initiated in April 1933. Roosevelt's administration hoped the program would relieve unemployment by providing conservation work, trade instruction and general education for young unmarried men across the nation. The demand for men and materials for World War II efforts led to the CCC program termination in 1942, shortly after the United States entered into the war.

The CCC program operated in 48 states, 3 territories and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. Between 1933 and 1942, work was provided for 3,000,000 enrollees living in 4,000 camps. Work tasks involved 297 crafts and trades as well as 50 different technical, clerical, administrative, food service and management occupations.

Federal money provided the men's salaries of $1.00 per day. Of the $30 dollars earned each month, $25 was sent back home, by the government, to help support families. The men were allowed to keep $5 to be used for personal expenses such as cigarettes, haircuts, movies and entertainment.



Organization

The U.S. Army was charged with the enlistment and transportation of the CCC enrollees and administration of the camps. The Army provided housing, meals, vocational and academic education, recreation, medical service, hygiene and clothing supplies. CCC clothing was World War I Army surplus. Each man was issued one dress and one work uniform, and was responsible for laundering his clothes. The young men attended a two week training course designed to prepare them for working together in large groups. As a rule, each permanent camp had the following Army personnel: a camp commander, an assistant commander, a lieutenant, a doctor and an educational advisor.

The men were required to sign up for six-month terms. Given the option of re-enlisting at the end of each term, many did. A maximum enrollment of two years was allowed. Enrollees had to be no younger than 17 years old and were no older than 26 years old.

Early CCC camps were tent camps. Permanent barracks were often constructed by the enrollees themselves. These main camps housed up to 250 men. "Spike camps", temporary tent encampments, were set up when project locations were too far from the main camp for easy commute. There were usually 49 men in the spike camp, due to a rule that required the camps be restricted to less than 50 enrollees,

While the Army administered the camps and personnel enlistment, it was the responsibility of specific government agencies to provide training and supervision for enrollees. Agency staff consisted of: a camp superintendent, engineer, several foremen or work supervisors who were often local professionals, an auto mechanic, a blacksmith, an enrollee clerk and a supply man. The staff was charged with: teaching needed work skills, directing project work, transporting enrollees to and from the work project, job safety, tools and equipment. Each camp was assigned a fleet of trucks, tractors and other types of equipment, depending on designated work projects.

Many of the young men who entered the CCC had no manual work skills. A focus of the CCC was to teach new skills that would benefit them throughout life. The camp offered general education courses for the men during the evening hours and many men learned to read and write. CCC participation restored self-esteem and taught new skills which would enable enrollees to get jobs after leaving the program. Many men stayed in the areas where they worked in the CCCs, found jobs and married local women. All enrollees were encouraged to look for work while enrolled in the program and many found jobs with the railroad or highway department. Once they found jobs, an early release or discharge could be obtained.

Nevada CCC Camps

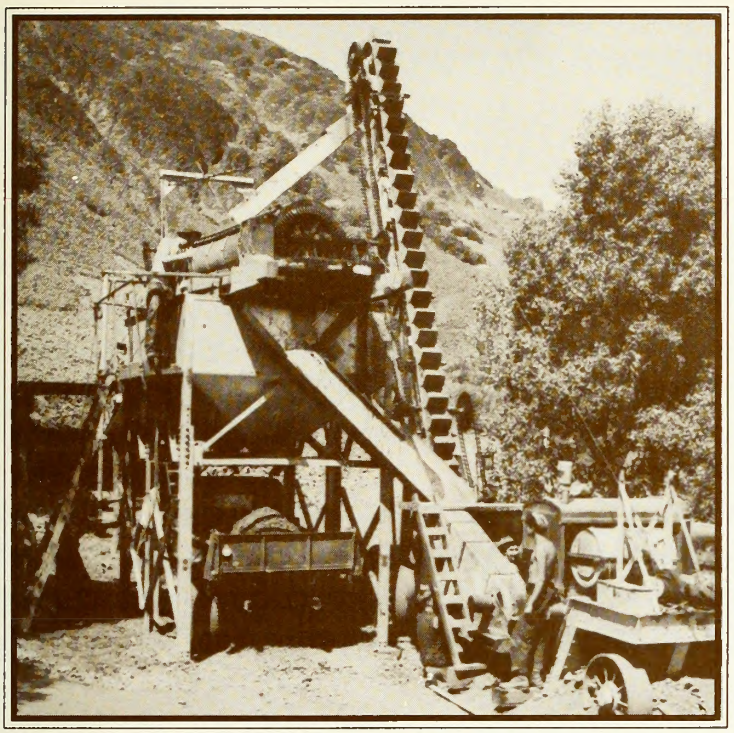
Fifty-four camps operated in Nevada between 1933 and 1942. Camps operated under the following agencies: Forest Service (7), National Park Service (7), Soil Erosion Service (6), Soil Conservation Service (6), Fish and Wildlife Service (5), Bureau of Reclamation (5) the US Naval Ammunition Depot (2). A camp exclusively for Native Americans was located at McDermitt, Oregon, under the auspices of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The Division of Grazing/Grazing Services had 27 camps. This agency was later combined with the General Land Office to create the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in 1946.

Northern Nevada hosted several camps including numerous spike camps. Main camps in the area included: Lamoille, Paradise Valley, Charles Sheldon, Ruby Lake, Lovelock, Warm Creek, Tuscarora, Quinn River, Gerlach, Hubbard Ranch, Twin Bridges, Golconda and Oreana.

Camps were often closed or moved as work projects were completed. For example, a Paradise Valley camp was moved to Reese River and Oreana's camp moved to Lovelock. As agencies were abolished, camps were transferred, such as the Soil Erosion Service transferred five camps to the Soil Conservation Service. Nevada Department of Park's five camps were operated in conjunction with the National Park Service when funding allocations changed.

Projects

CCC projects were utilitarian, constructed simply and built to last. Using substantial materials and physical labor, many structures have withstood the test of time and are still in use today. The program mandated the use of local artisans, and local material whenever possible. "Roosevelt's Tree Army", as the CCC was sometimes called, fought fires, constructed and maintained roads and trails in Nevada. Stonework included masonry culvert heads and creek stabilization as well as foundations and buildings. Stonework was directed by masons, but the enrollees did much of the manual labor in the stone chipping, hauling and mortar mixing. Livestock water developments, ditches, pasture and boundary fences were constructed by the workers. Many of the Northern Nevada Forest Service Guard and Ranger Stations that are still in use today were constructed by CCC crews. Their distinct architectural style may be seen in such places as: Paradise Valley, Lamoille and Mountain City.



Other CCC projects in the Winnemucca vicinity completed for the Grazing Service and Forest Service include: four low profile diversion dams built on Martin Creek, the community cattle corrals and scale house built at Golconda which are still standing, and the Hinkey Summit/Canyon Creek Road which is still a main route over the Santa Rosa Range.

Nevada's CCC crews fought range and forest fires as well as structural fires. When the Auditorium Hotel caught fire in 1938 and threatened the entire town of Paradise Valley, CCC crews participated in a "bucket brigade". In 1939 a lightning caused range fire burned over 8,000 acres and took five fire fighters lives. The young men were from the Paradise Valley Camp, Company 1212. A monument to the young men, on US Highway 95 near Orovada, was constructed and paid for by CCC personnel.

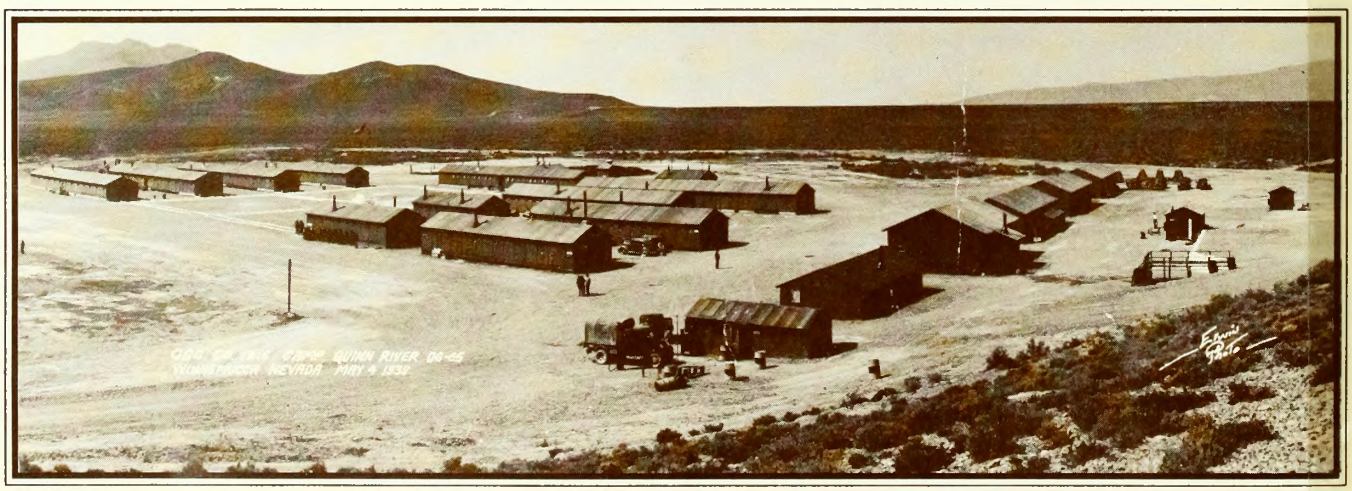
Mormon crickets infested areas of northern Nevada in the spring of 1939. CCC "cricket crews" constructed tin fences and dug trenches to control the spread of crickets. Using fences, crews drove crickets into oil filled trenches and burned them. Lacking tin for fences, an innovative method used by the Native American enrollees at McDermitt was "herding" the insects away from local alfalfa fields. Crickets were herded across the Quinn River using stick bridges constructed by the crews. The bridges were used to prevent the crickets from floating downstream and infesting other areas.

Community

The presence of CCC crews benefited local communities. Most camps had a medical doctor and maintained ambulance service to local hospitals. Civilians and camp personnel used these services. For example CCC camp doctors delivered babies and performed many emergency services not available in these remote areas.

The camps also bolstered the local economies. Ranchers sold meat, milk and eggs to the camps. A resourceful, local Paradise Valley rancher and store owner picked up garbage from the Paradise Valley Camp mess hall to feed his hogs. Larger towns like Elko, Lovelock and Winnemucca prospered from the sales of groceries, hardware and building supplies.

With the additional work of policing the added population of CCC enrollees, the Paradise Valley constable received an increase in pay from $40.00 to $90.00 per month, a considerable sum for 1934.



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Camp Life

Although the program was challenging, camp life could be quite dull. Many of the young men were not prepared for camp life in such isolated areas and became homesick. Compounding this was the regimentation and discipline of the military life style. Barracks were inspected once a week; flag raising and lowering ceremonies were conducted daily while the company stood at attention. Reveille and taps marked the beginning and end of each day.

To break the monotony, there were recreational activities. Main camps often had pool tables, table tennis, darts, cards, checkers, chess, reading materials and a camp PX. Members participated in the local activities such as dances and sports activities. Crew members joined and competed against local baseball, basketball and volleyball teams. Championship basketball players from Indiana were stationed at Golconda, and the Humboldt County High School coach encouraged these players to work with the Winnemucca school teams.

Letter writing to families was encouraged. Mail call, as always, was an important event of the day for enrollees far from home.

Free movies were shown once a week at the Paradise Hotel in Paradise Valley. A frustrating inconvenience was that there was only one projector so the audience waited while the film was rewound and the next reel strung.

Musically talented CCC members played in dance orchestras and others provided evening entertainment with sing-alongs often accompanied by guitar. Some camps had their own radio stations.

Enrollees could try their hand at journalism. Most of the larger camps had their own "newspapers". For instance, Gerlach camp had the *DG News* and Lamoille had the *Woodstick*.

Spartan spike camps lacked basic amenities such as electricity, and long term tent camping was wearisome. Popular reading material included comic books, various library books and newspapers from home. Rock collecting, aspen carving, and whittling were also pursued.

President Roosevelt's CCC experiment succeeded in combining a desperate attempt to get young men working with the efforts of conservation agencies to accomplish needed work. This is an important accomplishment that played a part in shaping what America has become today.

Appendix

ADVENTURES IN THE PAST

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages over 150,000 archaeological and historic sites, more than any other agency in the United States. While the BLM manages these resources to preserve them for future use, it also makes outstanding sites available for public use today. The Adventures in the Past program was developed in 1989 to provide focus and exposure to the BLM's ongoing efforts to educate the public about the country's archaeological and historic resources. The BLM also invites the public to help manage and protect these fragile resources.

WINDOWS ON THE PAST

The U.S. Forest Service program, Windows on the Past, provides opportunities to share the cultural heritage of the national forests with the recreation visitor by providing interpretive and educational information about prehistory and history. The Forest Service also provides opportunities for public participation in archaeological surveys and excavations as well as historic building studies and reconstructions, through the exciting Windows' program, Passports in Time. For information for Windows on the Past, call any U.S. Forest Service office.

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